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Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
---------- 125587
O R 250950Z FEB 76
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5655
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

S E C R E T SEOUL 1400

EXDIS

PLEASE PASS ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, UNGS, KS, KN
SUBJECT: KOREA AT 31ST UNGA: CONSULTATIONS

REF: (A) SEOUL 1227, (B) STATE 42834

SUMMARY: DESPITE AMBASSADOR'S STRONG PRESENTATION OF U.S. VIEWS CONTAINED IN REF B INSTRUCTION, FONMIN SAID ROKS STILL WISHED TO RECOMMEND TO CORE GROUP MEETING THAT WE LET NORTH KOREANS TAKE INITIATIVE THIS YEAR, TO POINT OF NOT SUBMITTING FRIENDLY RESOLUTION. FONMI ALSO DEFENDED PROPOSED PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT OUTLINED REF A. AMBASSADOR URGED RECONSIDERATION, SAID THAT IN MEANTIME WE WOULD HAVE TO RESERVE DECISION ON CORE MEETING DATE, AND ASKED FOR CAREFUL CONSULTATION ON ANY PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT. EMBASSY BELIEVES IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO CONVINCE ROKS NOT TO COMMIT SELVES AT CORE MEETING WHERE OTHER NATIONS COULD BE HELPFUL IN CONVINCING THEM OF UNREALITY THEIR POSITION. END SUMMARY.

1. OPENING SECOND ROUND CONSULTATIONS ON KOREA AT 31ST UNGA WITH FOREIGN MINISTER PARK TONG-CHIN FEBRUARY 24, AMBASSADOR REVIEWED ALL POINTS REFERENCE B INSTRUCTIONS, EMPHASIZING U.S. VIEW THAT: (A) IT WOULD NOT BE IN NEITHER U.S. NOR ROK INTEREST FOR LATTER TO EXPRESS PREFERENCE FOR ITS PREVIOUSLY OUTLINED SCENARIO AT
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CORE GROUP MEETING SINCE IT LIKELY BE VIEWED AS DEFEATIST AND

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WOULD DISCOURAGE ALLIES;

(B) TAKING INITIATIVE WILL BE IMPORTANT TO US THIS YEAR IN ORDER TO GENERATE SUPPORT;

(C) OBTAINING PRIORITY FOR FRIENDLY RESOLUTION ALSO MAY BE IMPORTANT;

(D) DELAY UNTIL NORTH KOREA TAKES INITIATION PROPOSED BY ROKS COULD SERIOUSLY INHIBIT LOBBYING EFFORT; AND

(E) PROPOSED STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT PARK AS PREVIOUSLY OUTLINED BY FONMIN UNDESIRABLE SINCE IT WOULD BE INTERPRETED ROKG TURNING BACK ON UN.

2. AMBASSADOR URGED NECESSITY OF JOINT POSITIVE, FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO CRE GROUP MEETING IN ORDER ELICIT SUPPORT FROM OTHERS.

3. IN RESPONSE, FONMIN STATED THAT MARCH 9 DATE FOR CORE GROUP MEETING IN NEW YORK ACCEPTABLE, THAT CHARACTERIZING MEETING AS CONSULTATIVE AND EXPLORATORY RATHER THAN DECISION-MAKING ALSO APPLICABLE, AND THAT HE CONSIDERED IT REASONABLE FOR ROKG TO OUTLINE OBJECTIVES, EXPLAIN OPTIONS, AND DISCUSS POTENTIAL PROBLEMS AT OUTSET OF MEETING. PARK ALSO AGREED ON NECESSITY AVOID DEFEATIST APPROACH. HOWEVER, HE THEN WENT ON TO REITERATE ROKG DESIRE TO EXPRESS OWN PREFERENCES AT CORE GROUP MEETING FOR NOT TAKING INITIATIVE IN PRESENTING FRIENDLY RESOLUTION THIS YEAR AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER NORTH KOREAN RESOLUTION INSCRIBED.

4. FONMIN SAID THAT THERE WERE THREE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES WITH US POSITION:
(1) US PREFERS TO TAKE INITIATIVE IN PRESENTING FRIENDLY RESOLUTION OR POSITION ON ASSUMPTION COMMUNISTS WILL INTRODUCE THEIR ITEM;
(2) US ATTACHES IMPORTANCE TO PRIORITY;
(3) US HAS IMPRESSION ROKG WILL PLAY LESS ACTIVE ROLE IN UNGA DEBATE THIS YEAR. FONMIN DID ASSURE AMBASSADOR ROKS HAD EVERY INTENTION ATTACKING NORTH KOREAN RESOLUTION WITH ALL ITS ENERGY.

5. PARK DEFENDED ROK POSITION, AS WELL AS PROPOSED STATEMENT
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BY PRESIDENT PARK OUTLINED SEOUL 1227, BY CLAIMING THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO KOREA TO MAKE POINT IT WISHED TO AVOID FRUITLESS UNGA DEBATE SUCH AS HELD LAST YEAR WHEN UN ADOPTED TWO CONFLICTING RESOLUTIONS. ROKS HOPED TO CAPITALIZE, PARK SAID, ON WIDESPREAD DISGUST OVER LAST YEAR'S UN ACTION AND RALLY SUPPORT FOR DIFFERENT APPROACH, NAMELY: (A) NOT TAKING INITIATIVE OR SEEKING PRIORITY; (B) FOCUSING EFFORTS ON GETTING BETTER VOTE AGAINST HOSTILE RESOLUTION; AND (C) DEVOTING ENERGY TO RESUMPTION

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SOUTH/NORTH DIALOGUE, CONVENING OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, AND OBJECTIVES IN LAST YEAR'S FRIENDLY RESOLUTION. TO FOLLOW US SUGGESTION IN OBTAINING PRIORITY FOR FRIENDLY RESOLUTION WOULD SIMPLY LEAD TO REPEAT OF LAST YEAR WITH LESS PROSPECTS FOR FRIENDLY RESOLUTION.

6. IN COURSE CONVERSATION PARK ALSO OUTLINED VARIETY OF TACTICAL OPTIONS THAT COULD BE DISCUSSED AT CORE GROUP MEETING INCLUDING: PROCEDURAL ATTEMPTS TO PREVENT NORTH KOREAN SUBMISSION; REQUEST THAT SECRETARY GENERAL USE GOOD OFFICES (WHICH PARK HIMSELF THOUGHT WAS POOR IDEA); AND VARIETY OF PROPOSALS FOR NEUTRAL NATION GROUPS TO SUBMIT RESOLUTIONS WHICH WESTERN NATIONS MIGHT SUPPORT. ALL OPTIONS HOWEVER, WERE BASED ON ASSUMPTION THAT NORTH KOREA WOULD BE ALLOWED TO TAKE INITIATIVE. FONMIN MADE POINT DURING CONVERSATION THAT UN VOTES AGAINST ISRAEL HAD MADE NO DIFFERENCE IN REAL TERMS AND THAT PASSAGE NORTH KOREAN RESOLUTION ALSO WOULD NOT HURT ROKS IN REA TERMS, WHEREAS DEFEAT OF FRIENDLY RESOLUTION WOULD.

7. IN RESPONSE THIS TOUGH REITERATION PREVIOUSLY STATED POSITION, AMBASSADOR ARGURED STRONGLY THAT TO TAKE PROPOSED ROK APPROACH IN CORE MEETING WOULD CREATE NEGATIVE ATMOSPHERE AND WOULD MOST LIKELY PREDETERMINE DEFEAT. ROK SCENARIO, SAID AMBASSADOR, WAS ATTEMPT TO SEEK EASY WAY OUT; OTHER CORE GROUP MEMBERS WOULD SEE THIS AND COULD WELL WASH THEIR HANDS OF WHOLE AFFAIR. AMBASSADOR WARNED THAT WE ALREADY HAD RECEIVED DISTRESSED QUERIES FROM SOME OF OUR AMBASSADORS REGARDING DIRECTION ROK EFFORTS THIS YEAR. AMBASSADOR THEN SAID IN LIGHT OF ROK POSITION, THAT, SUBJECT TO WASHINGTON CONFIRMATION, HE WOULD HAVE TO RESERVE POSITION ON PREVIOUSLY AGREED DATE FOR CORE GROUP MEETING SINCE WE NOT READY TO ADOPT KIND OF TACTICS ROKS PROPOSING AND IT ESSENTIAL WE ENTER MEETING WITH JOINTLY AGREED APPROACH. AMBASSADOR URGED THAT ROKG RECONSIDER NOT ONLY QUESTION OF PRIORITY BUT NECESSITY AS WE

SEE IT OF INTRODUCING AT LEAST OUTLINES OF FRIENDLY RESOLUTION IN ORDER TO HAVE ANY REAL POSSIBILITY BRINGING FORTH ACCEPTABLE COMPROMISE RESOLUTION FROM NEUTRAL NATIONS. AMBASSADOR ASKED, IF AT MINIMUM, ROK REPRESENTATIVES PREPARED NOT TO EXPRESS PREFERENCE FOR OWN POSITION AT CORE GROUP MEETING AND PRESENT ALL OPTIONS. AMBASSADOR ALSO MADE POINT THAT PUBLIC STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT PARK ON THIS SUBJECT WOULD EFFECT U.S. AS WELL AS ROK INTEREST AND ASKED THAT ROK CONSULT VERY CAREFULLY WITH US ON ANY SUCH STATEMENT BEFORE HAND.

8. IN FINAL STATEMENT FONMIN NOTED THAT POSITION HE HAD TAKEN WAS NOT FINAL, THAT IT WAS, OF COURSE, ESSENTIAL US AND ROK ENTER CORE GROUP MEETING WITHCOMMON APPROACH.HE PROMISED THAT ROKG WOULD CAREFULLYSTUDY AMBASSADOR'S COMMENTS, BUT DID NOT BUDGE ON BASIC ROK POSITION WHICH HE HAD PRESENTED.

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9. COMMENT: ROKG POSITION HAS CLEARLY HARDENED SINCE INITIAL CONSULTATION. ROK TACTICS ARE BASED ON COMBINATION OF MISCALULATION AND DESIRE TO DEVISE "NEW" TACTICS, PLUS GENERAL UNHAPPINESS WITH LAST YEAR'S FRUITLESS DEBATE AND FEAR OF DOMESTIC CONSEQUENCES OF DEFEAT OF FRIENDLY RESOLUTIONS. WE BELIEVE THESE VIEWS MAY WELL BE ENTRENCHED SINCE THEY HAVE BEEN DEVELOPING FOR SOME TIME AND FLOW FROM PRESIDENT PARK'S UNHAPPINESS WITH CONTINUATION OF UN EXERCISE. UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES PERHAPS BEST APPROACH MAY NOW BE TO ATTEMPT TO PERSUADE ROKS TO ADOPT NEUTRAL POSITION WITHOUT EXPRESSING PREFERENCE AT CORE MEETING, EVEN THOUGH THEY MAY CONTINUE TO DISAGREE WITH OUR BASIC APPROACH. WE SUSPECT ROKS WILL COME AROUND WHEN OTHER CORE GROUP MEMBERS BRING HOME REALITIES OF DEFEATIST COURSE OF ACTION ROKS ADVOCATING. REQUEST CONFIRMATION ON DEFERRING AGREEMENT TO CORE GROUP MEETING MARCH9, UNTIL AT LEAST US AND ROKG POSITIONS MORE CLOSELY ALIGNED.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: UNGA RESOLUTIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976SEOUL01400
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760070-0546
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760214/aaaaaltm.tel
Line Count: 185
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 76 SEOUL 1227, 76 STATE 42834
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 MAY 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <07 SEP 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KOREA AT 31ST UNGA: CONSULTATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, KS, KN, UNSC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006